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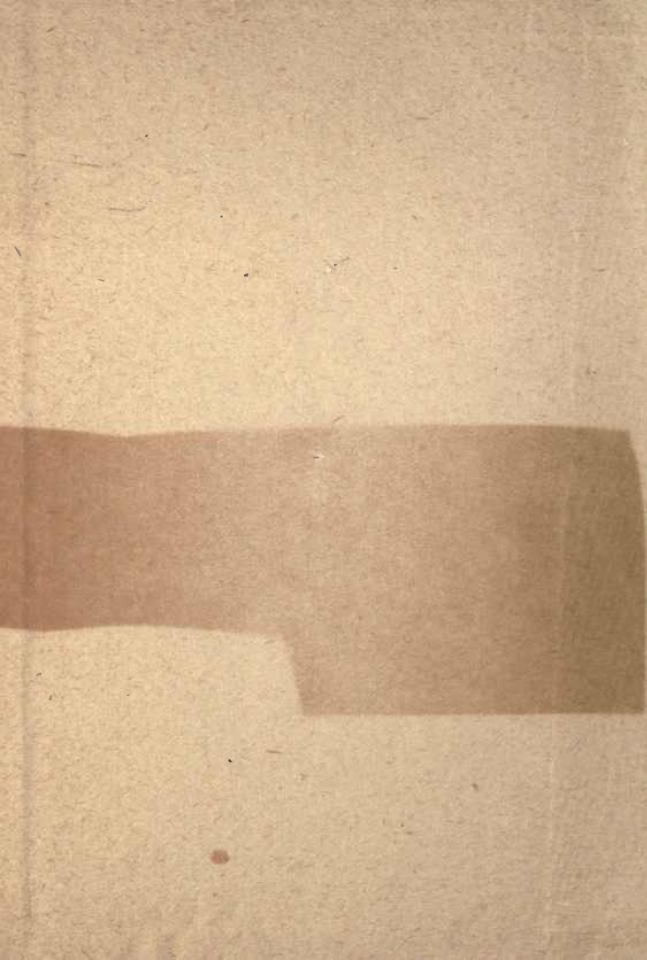


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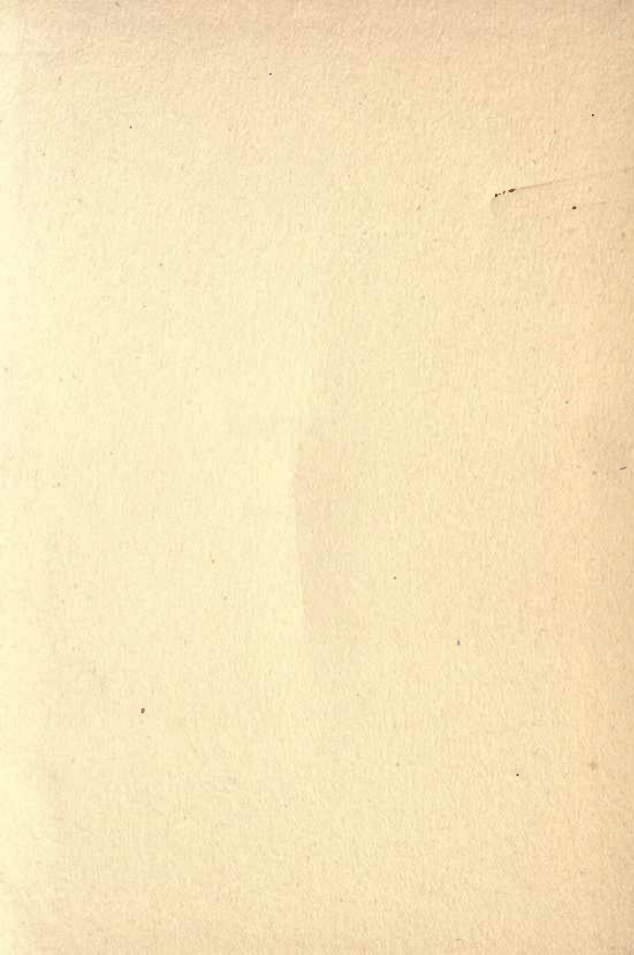
EDWARD MARTYN



Irene Gwen Andrews

April 1923





MAEVE

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MAEVE

A PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA
IN TWO ACTS

BY

EDWARD MARTYN

AUTHOR OF

"THE HEATHER FIELD," ETC.



DUBLIN
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE O'HEYNE, Colman O'Heyne, Prince of Burren.

MAEVE O'HEYNE, }
FINOLA O'HEYNE, } his daughters.

HUGH FITZ WALTER, a young Englishman

PEG INERNY, a vagrant.

In the dream of MAEVE appear QUEEN MAEVE, A BOY PAGE
CHORUS OF BOY PAGES, *ancient Irish harpers, chieftains*
warriors, people, etc.

The action takes place about the year 1900 near and at
O'Heyne Castle among the Burren Mountains of County
Clare in Ireland.

ACT I

SCENE.—*A ruined abbey in a green valley among mountains covered with layers of grey rock. At back a little removed is a cairn overgrown with grass. Gray limestones belonging to the ruin are strewn about the ground. At the left in the surrounding pasture of pale green, great leafless ash trees stand among boulders spotted with white and orange lichen. It is a sunny evening in the month of March.*

[MAEVE O'HEYNE—a girl of about three and twenty with a fair complexion, gold hair, and a certain boyish beauty in the lines and movement of her slim figure, rests thoughtful and attentive on one of the fallen stones. She wears a red frieze dress with a black jacket and folding linen collar, and has on her head a sailor's cap of black wool.

[FINOLA O'HEYNE—a dark, rather submissive-looking girl somewhat younger, dressed simply in an ordinary gown, sits on another stone near.

FINOLA [*Reading from an old book.*]——

“ Every hill which is at this Oenach
Hath under it heroes and queens,
And poets and distributors,
And fair fierce women.”

MAEVE. [*Rises and gazes before her as if in a dream.*] And fair fierce women—— !

FIN. [*Closing the book, goes to her.*] Maeve—what are you thinking of so earnestly ?

MA. [*Recalled to herself.*] Visions—visions—That is all.

FIN. Has this old West Connacht poem brought you visions ?

MA. Ah, the bard Dorban, who wrote it, was a poet ! [*She sighs and covers her face with her hands.*]

FIN. [*Turning away.*] I am sorry I thought of reading it to you.

MA. Why, sister—— ?

FIN. Because it seems to have called you back to your old self.

MA. [*Smiling sadly.*] My old self—As if I could ever have left my old self——

FIN. Oh yes, you were peaceful and contented a little while ago.

MA. It seems so long ago, Finola.

FIN. Something strange has come over you now.

MA. [*With restlessness.*] No, it is nothing. It is only the look of the evening.

FIN. But this is such a peaceful evening with that

saffron sunlight over the ruins. Why should it make you anything else but peaceful ?

MA. Oh, Finola, when I see the ruins like that, I know the visions are near me.

FIN. Then, after all, it was not because I read that poem ?

MA. Yes—that, and the evening——

FIN. [*Looking at her anxiously.*] Why should the visions make you so sad, Maeve ?

MA. [*Wistfully.*] Such beautiful dead people—! They used to walk in the oldest of these ruins before it was a ruin ; they watched Goban, the great architect, building that round tower—[*pointing to the right*] building his master-work. I see them now, and I see others who lived long before them [*turns and looks to the back*], and are buried in that green cairn. Oh, I am dying because I am exiled from such beauty.

FIN. [*With great gentleness.*] Darling, you must not think of these things. You know to-morrow——

MA. [*With sudden chilliness.*] To-morrow—why do you speak of to-morrow while it is still to-day, and I can still think of my love ?

FIN. To-morrow when you are married, Maeve, it will be your husband who will be entitled to that love.

MA. [*Significantly.*] He has not yet returned.

FIN. Hugh will certainly return before night.

MA. But he has not yet returned, Finola.

FIN. Do you really think he will not return ?

MA. [*With a baffled look.*] Oh, I don't know : but

somehow I cannot believe that I am to be married to-morrow. [*Looks around.*] To leave all this for an English home——

FIN. [*With increased anxiety.*] Maeve——

MA. The very stones, as I wander among them, seem to forbid it. [*Exit among the ruins at back.*]

FIN. [*Walking about in agitation.*] Oh, why does not Hugh return? [*Then suddenly stopping.*] Here is father again. Poor father——

THE O'HEYNE *enters from the left, leaning heavily on a stick. He is an old man, with thin, white dishevelled hair almost falling to his shoulders, wears a tall hat and clothes of a somewhat bygone fashion, while about his whole appearance there is just a suggestion of the peasant.*

THE O'H. [*Restlessly.*] Finola, I wonder will Hugh come after all?

FIN. Of course he will, father. Why have you been asking me this question all day?

THE O'H. Because he has been promising to come for ever so long, and he has not come.

FIN. Well—you know the reason.

THE O'H. [*Peevishly.*] Yes—yes—legal business—always the same excuse——

FIN. You surely must understand that he had to consult the lawyers about many matters before his marriage with Maeve.

THE O'H. When he left here for England he said

it would only be for a little time, and here he has been away more than two months.

FIN. The delay was very unfortunate, but necessary, I suppose. You see every sort of legal business is so tedious.

THE O'H. I don't know—I don't know. I distrust his excuses. He said he would certainly return to-day, and there, he hasn't after all.

FIN. But to-day is not yet over. Oh, you needn't fear. He will return before to-morrow.

THE O'H. Ah, this is the way you are perpetually making excuses for him, Finola.

FIN. [*A little confused.*] Father, why do you say so?

THE O'H. I understand it all. Another girl would not be so forgiving as you are, Finola.

FIN. I have nothing to forgive.

THE O'H. That is well, child. But, believe me, I had far rather he had married you than Maeve.

FIN. Oh, no—He always liked Maeve from the first, and no one else. I never at any time doubted that, father.

THE O'H. Well, this is certainly a queer way of showing his affection for her.

FIN. I suppose it would be, if there were no reasons for it.

THE O'H. [*Indignantly.*] To think he should have put off coming until his very wedding morning—He deserves to lose her after leaving her all this time. Oh the persistent ill-luck that has pursued me all through life——

FIN. I'm sure I can't think how you consider it ill-luck to be on the eve of having all your wishes fulfilled.

THE O'H. Ah, that is just it, child. I have so often been on the eve of having my wishes fulfilled: and then somehow the unforeseen has come about: and all my hopes have gone from me. I am surely the most unfortunate of men.

FIN. Father, dear, you must not despond in this way.

THE O'H. To think of all the anxiety your sister has caused me, Finola, and the trouble she put me to before she would accept this rich young Englishman—She must have been mad. As if the coming into this place of such a suitor was an everyday event to her.

FIN. [*Pensively.*] He never for a moment interested her somehow. It was very strange, his coming—wasn't it?

THE O'H. Was there ever such good fortune? I advertise the fishing of my river in the papers. He arrives here last summer, and takes it at once. To be sure it is splendid salmon fishing—but that it should have brought such a tenant as Hugh Fitz Walter—and that he should have fallen in love with Maeve—well——

FIN. [*With a sigh.*] Well, father, you ought to be content with such good fortune.

THE O'H. [*Despondingly.*] Ah, I am afraid it is too good to come to anything. But just think that after all *he* should be the one to wreck this good fortune—

Oh, I am distracted. [*He begins to work his hands and tear his hair.*]

FIN. [*Alarmed.*] Father, don't fret in this way. It is bad for your health. And you know there is no reason for it.

THE O'H. [*Feebly.*] Oh child, if you could only realise how I have waited and waited for this—for the time when fortune would enable our family to resume its fitting position in the county! Hugh has at last promised me this fortune. Is it surprising that I should be anxious, when I see the danger of his failing me?

FIN. [*Inadvertently.*] He is not the one who will fail you, father.

THE O'H. [*With a quick suspicion.*] You think Maeve is more likely to—eh? Where is she?

FIN. Oh don't trouble about her. She is safe.

THE O'H. I noticed she was taking to her old habits lately. I had again to forbid her to wander through the country at night.

FIN. [*As if laughing the matter off.*] You must not mind those wanderings of hers. They are very harmless, father.

THE O'H. [*Anxiously.*] Does she still talk of this strange one she is in love with?

FIN. Oh that is nothing. Don't trouble about it.

THE O'H. I am not so sure of what you say, Finola. I'll take my oath she is thinking about some good for nothing fellow after all.

FIN. No—no, nothing of the kind—You don't understand her.

THE O'H. Indeed I don't, child.

FIN. It is not often easy to do so. She seems to live by the brain as we live by the heart.

THE O'H. She seems to me quite regardless of realities.

FIN. Those feelings and impulses which are in our hearts and which govern our affections, with her are all in the head. This sounds strange : but it is the only way I can account for her nature.

THE O'H. [*Surprised.*] In the head—— ?

FIN. Yes—that is why she appears so cold, and, as you say, regardless of realities. I even think if this one she loves were to become a reality, he would cease to fascinate her.

THE O'H. [*Curiously.*] Have you ever found out who he is ?

FIN. No—not altogether——

THE O'H. I wonder what put such an extravagant idea in her head.

FIN. I think I know.

THE O'H. Well, what is it ?

FIN. Would you believe it, father, I think it is those books that belonged to Uncle Bryan.

THE O'H. You mean those books up in the top room. They are mostly about ancient Greece, aren't they ?

FIN. Yes—She is always poring over them and looking at their pictures—white statues and beautiful wall ornaments which she told me were in Greece. And then she showed me other books too, with pictures of pillars and arches—all ornamented like

those in the abbey here. Then I have seen her take the writings of Uncle Bryan and study them with all these pictures before her.

THE O'H. Poor Bryan's writings, do you say? I didn't think there were any here. I thought the Society he belonged to, took them all. [*With plaintive regret.*] My poor brother Bryan—he was a great scholar. They used to talk of him in Dublin. They said if he had lived to complete his book, it would have made him famous.

FIN. What was he writing about when he died, father?

THE O'H. Let me see—I think his work was to be called "The Influence of Greek Art on Celtic Ornament" or something of the sort.

FIN. That must have been it; for Maeve is always talking of that, and of the brotherhood of the Greek and Celtic races, and of a curious unreal beauty besides, which she says the Greeks invented. She thinks she has discovered something similar in the Celt.

THE O'H. Is that what you say she is in love with?

FIN. [*With earnest conviction.*] I verily believe so, father. [*Then after a moment's consideration.*] Still it often seems to me she must have some individual in her mind besides.

THE O'H. I thought that was the case.

FIN. Oh—not what you think——

THE O'H. What then, child——?

FIN. I don't know;—she speaks of his beauty as

if it had some sort of likeness to the Celtic ornament she is so much in love with.

THE O'H. Ah, she must have discovered this in the writings of Bryan. He had all sorts of odd theories about everything, poor fellow.

FIN. Yes, and she is as full of theories. She says that, because Celtic ornament is as rare and delicate as the Greek, so her pattern of Celtic youth must, in the same way, equal the perfection of Greek youth.

THE O'H. [*Astonished.*] My goodness, is the whole of life like this to her ?

FIN. Ah, now you understand what I meant when I told you that everything with her seemed to be only in the head.

THE O'H. [*Seriously.*] Yes, Finola, and nothing in the heart—She has no warm feelings of the heart. she was always cold and distant from her earliest childhood.

FIN. No, I would not say so much. I think it is only her imagination that has absorbed all the warmth of her nature.

THE O'H. What you say is the same thing, my dear. Whatever may be the cause, depend upon it, she has no feeling.

FIN. Oh, don't say that, father.

THE O'H. Oh no, she hasn't, Finola ; and I don't wonder that this young man's affection should at last weary of her apathy.

FIN. It is not any want of affection that has delayed him, father.

THE O'H. I cannot believe any more in his affection. [*Querulously.*] Why is he not here? Why is he not here?

FIN. You will surely see him very soon. For goodness sake, do not fret so. Go in, and try and rest.

THE O'H. Rest—I cannot rest. How can I rest with this anxiety gnawing at me?

FIN. Oh, this miserable pride and position—They are ruining your health and peace.

THE O'H. [*With a sudden reviving of energy.*] Not they, my girl, indeed—why do you say so? Why should what are good for every other man be bad for old Colman O'Heyne?

FIN. Yes, yes, father dear, I know. But somehow we have been so happy and united in our seclusion here. We are going to be divided.

THE O'H. How divided—?

FIN. Maeve will soon leave us.

THE O'H. Ah—yes, of course—

FIN. Let that be sufficient. Let us at least not try to go out into the world.

THE O'H. Why not, Finola—?

FIN. The world is such a great lonely place.

THE O'H. But my lost position—the lost dignity of our family—I have that to reassert. When my rich son-in-law comes there will be an end of our poverty.

FIN. You are the Prince of Burren. Is not the royalty of our race acknowledged? What place can *we* find in a grotesque world of plutocrats and

shopkeeper peers? This change in our life seems unnatural to me. And then that wicked old Peg Inerny is always talking.

THE O'H. [*Sharply.*] Eh—what does she say?

FIN. Oh, nothing definite—nothing but insinuations and mystery, till I feel quite terrified——

THE O'H. She has been the curse of our house; and now the infernal witch has bewitched your sister.

FIN. I don't think that—I hope not. Maeve is only fascinated by her strange tales—the past, always the past.

THE O'H. Ay, it was the same way with your poor mother and this Peg Inerny who was a servant here long ago, and put it into her head to call your sister by the name of Maeve. Peg Inerny, I know, had some sinister object for this.

FIN. Oh, no, no——

THE O'H. Ah—wait a while.

FIN. [*With a scared look.*] Father, don't forebode evil. Try and be contented—try and check this restlessness that is urging you to change your life. Let us go in. [*As they move to the left.*] Look at our old castle. How spectral those giant ash trees rise up around it from the pale March grass. How peaceful they all live in the sunset. Would it not be misery to leave that peace for a world where there is at least no peace.

HUGH FITZ WALTER—a good-looking young Englishman of about five and twenty, dressed in a tweed suit—enters at the right.

HUGH. [*Eagerly.*] So I have arrived, you see, at last.

THE O'H. [*Turning.*] Who is that? What, Hugh——?

HUGH. It is I.

THE O'H. And so it is. Heaven be praised. I thought you were never coming, Hugh. [*He shakes him by the hand.*]

FIN. [*Also shaking him by the hand.*] I am so glad you have come—at last.

HUGH. But I wrote to you my reason for not getting here sooner.

THE O'H. Yes, I know, of course. But why should you have put off coming like this till the very last?

HUGH. Haven't I explained to you again and again how my affairs delayed me?

THE O'H. [*Peevishly.*] Yes—yes—explanations—You have caused me, Hugh, the greatest anxiety for all that.

HUGH. I assure you, O'Heyne, this delay was sorely against my will: and I am sorry you have had any anxiety on my account. Why you have, indeed, I cannot understand.

THE O'H. My mind has been a prey to all sorts of doubts and forebodings.

HUGH. [*Alarmed.*] Goodness—! What is this for? Isn't Maeve well? How is she?

THE O'H. [*Impatiently.*] Oh, she is well—well enough.

HUGH. You are hiding something from me, O'Heyne.

THE O'H. No—not at all——

HUGH. I, too, was anxious. That is why I hurried here at once after my arrival in the village.

THE O'H. [*Suspiciously.*] Eh—why were you anxious?

HUGH. I had not heard about her from Finola for some days.

THE O'H. There is nothing the matter with her except what has come by your protracted absence.

HUGH. [*Frightened.*] What has come to her? You alarm me.

THE O'H. Only a return of her strange ways that used to trouble me before her engagement to you—That is all.

HUGH. [*With visible relief.*] Oh—that is all.

THE O'H. [*Involuntarily.*] She frightens me sometimes.

HUGH. In what way?

THE O'H. [*Hesitates and looks confused.*]

FIN. Oh, don't worry her about such things. Hush, here she comes.

MAEVE O'HEYNE *enters from the back.*

HUGH. Oh, Maeve, what is it——?

MA. [*Starts when she perceives him.*]

HUGH. [*Goes eagerly to her, but is checked by the*

chillness of her manner, then taking her hand which she gives apathetically.] I hope you are not angry, Maeve. I came as soon as it was possible for me.

MA. [*With some recovered composure.*] Oh—for that—I am not angry in the least—I am not angry at all.

HUGH. You looked as if something disturbed you.

FIN. Hugh, it is only her surprise at suddenly seeing you.

THE O'H. Yes, indeed, when you have disappointed her so often—But, thank heaven, you have arrived safe at last. Come, Finola, come, now I can rest. I feel I want rest after all this suspense. Come, let us go indoors.

[*Exeunt* THE O'HEYNE and FINOLA
O'HEYNE *at left.*]

HUGH. [*To MAEVE.*] Well, I am back at last; and you—you are so silent and forgetful there among those old stones.

MA. [*As if recalled to herself.*] No—I am in reality thinking of this very thing.

HUGH. Of my coming—?

MA. Yes—

HUGH. It has no interest for you one way or the other?

MA. Oh yes—But I cannot understand father's reason for being so troubled about it.

HUGH. Of course not—As if I wouldn't return on the first opportunity to you—Why do you seem annoyed that I should tell you this?

MA. [*Restlessly.*] Somehow there seem such cross purposes in this world of ours.

HUGH. Cross purposes—how so—— ?

MA. Oh, I don't know—persons seem to give others what those others don't want from them, but want from some one else.

HUGH. That is indeed a world of cross purposes.

MA. [*Sadly.*] Don't you see that it is just so with us here ?

HUGH. [*Dejectedly.*] You mean that I give what is not wanted.

MA. Yes, and that another would give you what you want from some one else——

HUGH. Who is that other ?

MA. The one whom you once appeared to like best.

HUGH. You are the one I always liked best in the world.

MA. The world did not think so.

HUGH. Indeed— ? You puzzle me. Explain what you are saying ?

MA. [*With a certain embarrassment.*] I thought you liked my sister better than me.

HUGH. Than you— ? Oh no—impossible—I know you don't believe what you are saying.

MA. But you appeared to be so much more intimate with her than you have been with me.

HUGH. Ah, that is just it. I have the greatest affection for Finola. I admire her goodness and unselfishness. She has indeed the disposition of an angel.

MA. And yet you could leave her for one so less worthy, as I am.

HUGH. You shall not say you are less worthy ; I can see no fault in you.

MA. Oh, why did you ever leave Finola ?

HUGH. You forget we were never more than friends. She is one of my very dearest friends.

MA. And you were never engaged to her ?

HUGH. Never—It was only when I despaired of your consent that I thought for a while of Finola. But it was no use. Your image always rose up between us. I soon understood that for me you were the only one in the world. [*Pause.*]

MA. [*Absently.*] The only one in the world. What happiness it must be to find the one who is so much as that.

HUGH. It may also be misery—that is, in a certain sense.

MA. [*A little surprised.*] Really—? How can it be misery ?

HUGH. When we know that nothing of what we feel is returned.

MA. [*Abstractedly.*] I should not have thought that much mattered.

HUGH. Do you say this because I persist in loving you through all your contempt of my love ?

MA. Oh no—I was not thinking of you at all.

HUGH. What was your reason then for saying it ?

MA. [*With a pensive deliberation.*] I should have imagined that if one really loved, one would shrink from a return of love.

HUGH. [*Surprised.*] You wouldn't like your love returned ?

MA. Ah no, for I think if it were, the beauty of love would come to an end in the lover.

HUGH. How very strange—! But why should I think so ? Yours is the reasoning of one who has never known love.

MA. So you think I have never known love ?

HUGH. Certainly— [*Pause.*] Have you ?

MA. Well, I can tell you truly that I have.

HUGH. [*In a serious tone.*] Is that really so ?

MA. Yes——

HUGH. [*With a sudden suspicion.*] Do you love some one now ?

MA. [*Quietly.*] Yes——

HUGH. [*Growing excited.*] Who is he ?

MA. [*Wearily.*] Oh, what is the use of telling you ?

HUGH. Who is he, I say ? For pity's sake speak.

MA. You would never understand.

HUGH. [*Bitterly.*] I would understand only too well.

MA. Look around you, then.

HUGH. [*Puzzled, looking around him.*] Well— ? I see no one.

MA. [*Scornfully.*] I knew you would not understand.

HUGH. [*Wondering.*] I see nothing but these ruins—that mysterious round tower—the stony mountains—and your grey castle through the leafless boughs of great ash trees.

MA. [*With a visionary look in her eyes.*] And you see nothing but these ?

HUGH. Oh, what is this mystery ? Will you tell me ?

MA. [*Smiling ecstatically.*] Among all these that you see—listen to what Gràinne says in the old poem——

“ There lives a one
On whom I would love to gaze long,
For whom I would give the whole world,
All, all, though it is a delusion.”

HUGH. [*Downcast.*] You are mocking me.

MA. [*Gently.*] Oh, no.—How can you think so ? Are not all things beautiful that remind us of our love ?

HUGH. [*After looking at her calmly for some time.*] Yes, you are right. How strange you are. I do not understand you. Among us simple men you seem like one of your golden fairies. What is the name you call them ?

MA. Tûatha dê Danann, those tall beautiful children of the Dagda Môr. It is said they were the old people of Erin and were afterwards worshipped as gods.

HUGH. But you do not believe they are really gods ?

MA. Oh, no—only a race whose great beauty still haunts our land. [*Sadly.*] They were too beautiful to compare with me.

HUGH. They could not be more beautiful than you

are. You don't know how beautiful you are to me. No—if you knew, you would not be so indifferent. Ah, I realise but too well how little you care for me. You would never have consented to be my wife but for your father : you are doing it all for your father—not for me.

MA. Oh, why do you go back to all that ? Have I not consented ? And is not that the main thing ?

HUGH. [*Resignedly.*] Yes,—I suppose I must be satisfied. I must only trust to time for winning you completely.

MA. [*With mysterious significance.*] Let us all trust to time.

HUGH. [*Brightening.*] May I put my trust in time ?

MA. You must ask that question of Time himself.

HUGH. Oh, I am confident of his answer.

MA. And I too, am confident in Time.

[*Exeunt leisurely at the left.*]

As they are going, PEG INERNY—a little old woman in a ragged red frieze petticoat, a black frieze cloak raised up to partially cover her head, and with dark woollen stockings worn away at the bare soles of her feet—enters stealthily from among the ruins at back. Muttering indistinctly she follows the two for a while, then squats down on a stone and gazes fixedly at the cairn.

After a pause MAEVE and FINOLA O'HEYNE enter at the left.

FIN. Oh, Maeve, why do you come out here again ?

MA. [*Joyfully.*] He is gone. Until to-morrow, at least I shall be free.

FIN. Poor Hugh——

MA. He is gone ; and I will make the most of my little liberty. I have to say good-bye to beauty. How this moonlit night—this Irish night comes like a fawn—— !

FIN. [*Perceives PEG INERNY and stands as if transfixed.*]

MA. What's the matter, Finola ? [*Turns and looks.*] Oh, it is only Peg Inerny.

FIN. Come away, Maeve, for heavens' sake come. I have left father sleeping in the hall ; and if he awakes he is sure to call me, and ask where you are.

MA. [*Not heeding FINOLA.*] Peg, Peg, I have not seen you for many days. What has brought you here to-night ?

PEG. [*Rousing herself slowly and looking steadily at MAEVE.*] I come to take a last farewell of my Princess on the night before her wedding day.

MA. [*With a rigid melancholy.*] Yes, I shall never return here, Peg.

PEG. Do you think you will ever leave, Princess ?

FIN. Oh, what is that she says ? I am terrified.

MA. [*Carelessly.*] You are always alarmed at one thing or another, Finola.

FIN. [*Uneasily.*] No—no—but didn't you hear her ?

PEG. [*To FINOLA.*] Princess, do not fear a poor old woman.

FIN. Why will you always call us princesses ?

PEG. Isn't your father a prince ? The Prince of Burren—— ?

MA. [*Impatiently.*] A prince indeed—It is a mockery now to call him that.

PEG. The O'Heyne is none the less a prince whatever he may have done to put shame on his race.

MA. [*Helplessly.*] Oh, what a misfortune it was.

FIN. [*Expostulating.*] Meave—darling——

PEG. [*Slyly.*] They told me my Princess Maeve was content to marry her young Englishman.

MA. [*With suppressed scorn.*] Ha—no one ever troubled before to consider whether she was or not.

PEG. He is so rich—so rich with his grand English house and possessions.

MA. Yes indeed—and that is how the whole tragedy has come about.

PEG. I was sure you cared not, Princess, for this world's riches.

MA. [*Sadly.*] Heaven knows I never had any greed of them.

FIN. Oh Maeve, I thought you had done with these complaints once and for all.

MA. [*Pained and irresolute.*] So I, too, thought—once perhaps. But to-day in the abbey—it was so beautiful. Something seemed to come back to me.

PEG. It was haunting you, Princess ? The day-ghost, eh—— ?

MA. [*With a wan look.*] The day-ghost—Oh the wistful pleading of a day-ghost—— !

FIN. [*Frightened.*] Why do you say that, Maeve ?

MA. Ah—if you saw him—but you never have, Finola.

FIN. Saw him—good heavens, where—— ?

MA. [*Pointing to the round tower.*] In the master-work of Goban—in the mountains too——

PEG. Your love is dreaming among the rocks of these mountains, Princess.

MA. [*With a sort of ecstasy.*] Oh, how I have grown to love these stony mountains.

PEG. They are the pleasure haunts of many a beautiful ghost.

MA. The many beautiful buried in that cairn——

PEG. Oh what a world there is underneath that cairn.

MA. [*Pensively.*] Yes, the great beautiful Queen Maeve who reigned over Connacht hundreds of years ago—she is buried in that cairn you say ?

PEG. Haven't I often told you so, Princess ?

FIN. But I have always understood that Queen Maeve was buried at Rathcroghan in County Roscommon.

PEG. No, Princess, she is here.

FIN. [*Inquiringly.*] Can you know that ?

PEG. Can I know ? I can know many things. [*With a low laugh.*] Indeed I ought to know where Queen Maeve is.

MA. Why you especially, Peg—— ?

PEG. Haven't I dwelt in her palace, child ?

FIN. [*Timidly approaching MAEVE.*] That is a strange thing to say.

PEG. [*Continuing with a sort of inward satisfaction.*] Yes, I have dwelt in her palace. Ha—ha—does anyone think that I could bear my miserable outcast life in the world if I could not live the other life also ? Oh, my sweet ladies, you don't know the grandeur of that other life.

MA. [*Eagerly.*] Tell me, do tell me of that other life.

FIN. Maeve—take care—don't ask such a thing.

MA. [*Impatiently.*] Oh Finola, you mustn't prevent me in this way. [*To PEG INERNY.*] Tell me.

PEG. A life among the people with beautiful looks——

MA. [*Suddenly delighted.*] With beautiful looks—— !

PEG. Yes, Princess—Oh, just so graceful and clean as you are yourself. I often think you must be one of them.

MA. Tell me more about those people.

PEG. They are now ruled over by the great Queen Maeve.

MA. [*Puzzled.*] But—she is dead, isn't she ? Didn't you say she was buried in the cairn ?

PEG. [*With an enigmatical grimace.*] Yes, yes, Princess—but not dead—Oh, I never said that she was dead.

MA. What new and wonderful tale are you now telling me ?

PEG. Haven't I told you before that Queen Maeve has ever been watchful of you ?

MA. [*Surprised.*] No—you have not. What does this mean ?

PEG. Just fancy, Princess, it was she who had you called after herself.

FIN. [*Excitedly.*] Maeve, don't believe her. How is this possible?

PEG. Ah, Princess Finola, didn't you ever know that I was once a servant in the Castle?

FIN. [*Restraining herself.*] Yes, I believe you were. It was a very long time ago, was it not?

PEG. When your beautiful sister here was born——

FIN. Well then, supposing you were, what has that to do with Queen Maeve naming my sister?

PEG. [*Slyly.*] Oh—only 'twas I made them think of calling her Maeve.

FIN. But you said Queen Maeve did so?

PEG. [*With veiled significance.*] Haven't I told you of the other life I lead, sweet Princess Finola?

FIN. [*Starts, then looking awed and mystified at PEG INERNY, says in a trembling voice.*] Maeve, she is a wicked woman. It is not right to hold any intercourse with her.

MA. [*Who has been listening with a troubled expression.*] Ah me, I am the most miserable one in the world.

FIN. [*Terrified.*] Dearest, for pity's sake don't—don't give way to such a feeling.

MA. [*Despairingly.*] My father—oh, my father——

PEG. I know it was for his sake alone that you promised to marry this Hugh Fitz Walter.

MA. Yes, father will become rich and great—but my heart will break.

FIN. [*Anxiously.*] No—no, Maeve, you must re-

member how good and kind Hugh is. He will surely never cause you unhappiness.

MA. How could he be anything but unhappiness to me, when I can only think of my beloved ?

PEG. [*Insidiously.*] That one who haunts the mountains and the beautiful old buildings, Princess——

MA. My beloved, whom I am leaving for ever—— !

FIN. [*Throwing her arms around her sister.*] Hush—you must not think of him any more, Maeve !

PEG. Ah—you cling to her like ivy, my Lady Finola. You were the one made for clinging. You were the wife that would have been best for the Englishman.

MA. Oh, if he could but understand that this is so.

PEG. They never can, Princess. Dwellers in the valley are always looking at the heights above them.

MA. [*Sadly.*] I am no longer on those heights. I have fallen from them miserably, and have become [*looking at FINOLA,*] like the ivy in the valley.

PEG. Not yet—you are still on the heights. No, you are still like the tall smooth larch on the top of the mountain.

MA. [*Dejectedly.*] Ah, no, not any longer——

PEG. Come then, to the mountains, Princess—there you will believe it.

FIN. [*Restraining her.*] Maeve, Maeve, do not go ! It will kill father if he hears you have wandered away to-night.

PEG. See how bright it is. The night is lit for

your visit. [MAEVE *appears to hesitate.*] Beware of the ivy clinging around the larch, Princess Maeve. It will kill the fairy growth of the larch.

MA. [*Restlessly.*] Let me go, Finola, let me go.

FIN. I will not, Maeve.

MA. Let me go to the mountains for this last time. I promise to return soon.

FIN. Oh, sister, do not go there to-night.

MA. How white the moon rays dance upon the mountains!

PEG. It is the mountains, Princess, that are white with the dancing feet of the fairies!

MA. [*Desperately.*] I must go there to-night.

FIN. You shall not, Maeve.

MA. [*Gazing fondly on the mountains.*] Oh beauty of my day-dreams come forth from the mountains.

PEG. Princess, what is it that you see?

MA. [*With transport.*] My love, like an exhalation from the earth to the stars!

PEG. [*Moving towards the back.*] Come, Princess, come.

MA. I am coming.

FIN. [*With a sudden determination.*] Then I shall go too. I could not bear the suspense of your absence. [*Distant voice of THE O'HEYNE is heard several times calling "FINOLA."*] Good heavens, there is father calling. [*Runs to the left and listens in great agitation while the calling is repeated.*] Yes, father, yes, father——

[*Exeunt MAEVE O'HEYNE and PEG INERNY quickly at the back.*]

FIN. If he finds she has gone he will be so distressed. I must not tell him. Oh, Maeve, why, why have you gone? Yes, father—coming—coming——

[Exit at left.]

[Curtain.]

ACT II

SCENE.—*The exterior of O'Heyne Castle. At the left, conspicuous among a few nondescript buildings, part slated, part thatched, and adjoining them, is a large square tower with its two roof gables facing right and left, and Irish battlements which carry two high chimneys, one at front and one at back of roof. On ground level at front is the pointed Gothic entrance-door, over which a square-headed window lights a room above. Around great leafless ash trees grow upon the pale green grass. Some way off at the right is the cairn with the abbey ruins beyond ; and stony mountain ranges, as in the first act, form a background, to the whole scene. It is a frosty night with a very bright moon.*

[FINOLA O'HEYNE, closely muffled, comes out through the door of the castle.]

FIN. Maeve—Are you there, Maeve ? [Pause.]
Maeve— [Goes to the right and peers about.] I don't see any sign of her. Oh dear, oh dear, I wonder does she intend to come back. [With an anxious and undecided look.] I don't know which way to

search for her. Stop—I will try this path leading to the mountain. [*Exit at back behind the Castle.*]

MAEVE O'HEYNE, *looking very pale and listless, enters from the right.*

MA. [*Gazing forlorn around the scene.*] Oh, moon and mountain and ruin, give a voice to my infinite sadness ! [*Pause.*]

FINOLA O'HEYNE *re-enters from behind the Castle.*

FIN. O sister, you are here !

MA. [*Slowly.*] Yes——

FIN. Thank heaven, you have returned. [*She advances towards her.*]

MA. I said I would return, Finola.

FIN. Oh, I was so frightened. Aren't you perished without a cloak on, this bitter night ?

MA. [*Wearily.*] Is it so cold ?

FIN. [*Surprised.*] Cold—? You must feel this biting frosty air.

MA. No—not particularly——

FIN. [*Feeling the hands and face of Maeve.*] Why, Maeve, you are like ice.

MA. [*As if remembering.*] Like ice—How beautiful to be like the ice—— !

FIN. Oh, come in, come in from the cold.

MA. No—let me wait here, in the moonlight.

FIN. Darling, you will get dreadfully ill—and on your wedding morning too.

MA. [*With a shudder.*] What—it is not yet the day?

FIN. Midnight has just passed—yes, this is your wedding day.

MA. [*Mournfully.*] Oh, so soon—so soon——

FIN. Far better had it been sooner, my poor sister.

MA. Oh, don't say that, Finola.

FIN. Yes, yes, this long delay since your engagement has brought the old trouble upon you again.

MA. [*With a scornful smile.*] Do you think I was ever really reconciled to my fate?

FIN. And yet—and yet—you seemed happy for a while.

MA. No—never really—I was only talked into a false sort of happiness, Finola.

FIN. [*Expostulating.*] Oh, how can you say that?

MA. Yes, I deceived myself there among you. You all seemed so happy, and were so kind and indulgent to me, that I wished to believe this marriage was for the best.

FIN. And you never really believed it?

MA. Never—I was soon certain that I never did.

FIN. When was that?

MA. When he went to England to arrange with his lawyers, and this family happiness that encircled me gradually disappeared——

FIN. Do you think so? I am sure father and I have never changed.

MA. Perhaps not—but you understand, I was left more to myself and had time to think over what I

had done. [*Despairingly.*] Ah then I saw that I never could be reconciled to my fate.

FIN. Darling, you should not have encouraged such a thought. It will leave you, when you are married and away from here.

MA. Oh, the sacrifice—I make it for father's sake.

FIN. Be sure your sacrifice for father's sake will have its reward.

MA. It is a cruel sacrifice. And yet it must be.

FIN. Poor Hugh—At all events he is unchanged.

MA. I too am unchanged, Finola. Don't you see it after what I have told you?

FIN. I suppose so. But have you always disliked him? You do not hate him?

MA. Oh, but if you were to see him, Finola, in the light he appears to me——

FIN. How does he appear to you, dear?

MA. [*With sudden vehemence.*] A bandit—a plunderer——!

FIN. Maeve, what are you saying?

MA. Yes, I say a bandit, like his English predecessors who ruined every beautiful thing we ever had——

FIN. [*Frightened.*] Sister, how can you accuse him of that?

MA. [*Bitterly.*] Yes, he has come to ruin the last of our beautiful things.

FIN. He, who is so generous—? Why, instead of destroying, is he not restoring the dignity of our ancient Celtic house?

MA. [*Scornfully.*] Yes, I know what such restoration means. It is bought at too great a price, I can tell you. It is like that great restoration of a family's pride by Strongbow, who first brought our humiliation upon us.

FIN. No—I cannot see the likeness, Maeve.

MA. Don't you remember the conditions of the English noble whom the Irish king Diarmid called to his aid ?

FIN. Was it not, if Strongbow regained for Diarmid his kingdom he was to marry the king's daughter Eva ?

MA. Yes, and then become heir to Diarmid—He succeeded in regaining the kingdom, and the conditions were fulfilled, weren't they ?

FIN. They were.

MA. And thus with the power that was given him he subdued and ruined the ancient splendour of Eire. The old, old story—! Poor Eva, you were sacrificed—a sweet symbol of your country, in her subjection.

FIN. That may be, but still I can't understand in what way Hugh is to injure our country.

MA. By killing the last flame of her life——

FIN. The last flame of our country's life—? How is that ?

MA. Yes, the last light of her life——

FIN. What is this last light ?

MA. [*With a child's smile and as if forgetful of all sorrows.*] The fairy lamp of Celtic Beauty——!

FIN. [*After a moment, in a very gentle voice.*] Dearest, it is impossible he ever could do this thing.

MA. Is he not destroying my chosen way of life—that life which alone may keep the flame alight? Am I not the last?

FIN. The last—? Why should you think that you are the last?

MA. Listen and I will tell you, Finola. You have heard Peg Inerny speak of her other life, and of having dwelt in the palace of Queen Maeve.

FIN. [*Nervously.*] Yes—what of her——?

MA. This very night after I had left her upon the mountain I thought I saw her beckoning to me in the abbey. I followed her while she went past the round tower to the cairn which now was glowing against a sky that had turned crimson. With a gesture the old woman seemed to open the cairn, and then stood transformed in a curious region of fresh green suffused with saffron light, so that I saw her tall, and beautiful, and marvellously pale of face, and crowned with a golden diadem not so golden as her hair. And I heard her say these words in ancient Gaelic:—"Last Princess of Eire, thou art a lonely dweller among strange peoples; but I the great Queen Maeve have watched thee from thy birth, for thou wert to be the vestal of our country's last beauty. Behold whom thy love hath called to life. Mark him well, for already his hour of dissolution hath come." And I looked and saw him who was beauty standing by the round tower. With a feeling of nothingness, I fell upon my knees and bent down to the earth. When I looked again he was not there. Then a company of ancient Celts

bore a covered form upon their shoulders ; while a choir of rose-crowned boys sang dirges with violet voices of frail, lace-like beauty. And they buried their dead one by the round tower, and over his grave they raised a great ogham stone. And again I heard the voice of the Queen :—" They have buried thy dead beauty, Princess. Thou hast killed him by deserting thy chosen way of life ; for there are no more who live for beauty." Then in my desolation I seemed to lose consciousness of all save these last words of the queen : " Yet, princess, I will come and comfort thee again to-night." And with a start I discovered that I was sitting alone in the moonlight by the round tower. And I looked and looked, but I could not find the great ogham stone that they had raised over my beloved.

FIN. And so you were only dreaming after all ?

MA. Yes, it must have only been a dream—for my beloved is not dead.

FIN. Nor will Queen Maeve come to you again to-night.

MA. Do not be so sure of that, Finola.

FIN. [*In a frightened voice.*] Oh heavens ! there she is.

MA. [*Starting.*] Who—— ?

FIN. Peg Inerny——

PEG INERNY *enters from the right.*

PEG. My noble ladies——

FIN. [*Angrily.*] What do you want ?

PEG. Oh, I never thought you could be so sharp, Lady Finola.

FIN. [*With the desperation of terror.*] Go—you are here for no good purpose.

MA. [*Deprecatingly.*] Finola——

PEG. [*To FINOLA.*] Won't you give me the liberty of a wild beast to walk about at night, my dear?

FIN. [*Shrieking.*] Go, I say, or I will let loose the dogs of the castle upon you.

MA. Finola, for goodness sake, what are you saying? What wrong has she ever done to any of us?

FIN. Oh yes, don't I know her evil intentions towards you?

MA. I feel sure she has never done me harm.

PEG. [*To MAEVE.*] Sweet Princess, you'll rejoice for the gentleness you have shown me.

FIN. [*To PEG INERNY.*] I will call my father up if you don't leave at once. Come, sister, come into the castle.

PEG. Good-night, sweet Maeve—sleep—sleep—and dream. [*Exit at right.*]

MA. [*Yearningly.*] And dream—Oh that I could dream again to-night, that dream!

FIN. Don't think of it any more, dearest. Come in to rest.

MA. No—let me stay a while longer here.

FIN. But you will be frozen, Maeve. I wonder you ever awoke again after falling asleep in the abbey.

MA. Let me stay, Finola, I do not feel the cold.

FIN. It is because you are already so cold.

MA. My love is so divinely cold.

FIN. Ah, that is a strange sort of love.

MA. [*Wistfully.*] He is the only one I have ever loved. Let me stay. I hear him coming.

FIN. [*Frightened.*] You hear him——?

MA. [*Pointing towards the abbey.*] Yes, there, far away—coming on the wings of the March wind—Don't you hear?

FIN. I hear the bitter wind, Maeve, through our old ash trees.

MA. [*Smiling in reverie.*] The fairy March wind which races at twilight over our fields, turning them to that strange pale beauty, like the beauty of a fairy's face—Oh, it is fit that my beloved should ride on such a steed.

FIN. Dearest, you must go to rest. He will never come. He is dead.

MA. He is not dead. He will come. I know he will. But the way is long. A long—long way——

FIN. A long way, indeed, without beginning and without end——

MA. It began from the land of everlasting youth.

FIN. You have often told me of that land, Tirnan-ogue, is it not?

MA. The Celtic dream-land of ideal beauty—There he lives in never-fading freshness of youth. [*With a steadfast visionary look.*] I am haunted by a boyish face close hooded with short gold hair—and every movement of his slender faultless body goes straight to my heart like a fairy melody. Oh, he has a long

way to journey :—for that land of beauty was never so far away as it is to-night.

FIN. [*Sadly.*] It never was nearer, my poor sister. Come, I will see you to your rest.

MA. I must rest alone, Finola. You must not follow me to my room.

FIN. Why not, dear—— ?

MA. Oh, do not. Leave me to myself.

FIN. [*With a sigh.*] Very well, if you wish it——

MA. [*Going.*] Good-night——

FIN. Good-night, dear——

MA. [*Quickly turning and throwing her arms around*
FINOLA.] Good-night—good-bye—Oh my darling,
good-bye——

FIN. [*Consolingly.*] My poor Maeve, it is not yet the time for parting.

MA. Who knows where I must go, when my beloved shall come.

[*Exit hurriedly by door leading into the Castle.*

FIN. [*Wonderingly.*] What does she mean by those words ? [*With a reassured air.*] Oh, she is tired, poor sister. That is what it is. And I suppose her mind is confused with her imaginary difficulties. But all will come well in good time.

[*Exit by door leading into the Castle. Pause.*

MAEVE O'HEYNE appears at the window of the castle above the entrance door at front, and slowly opens the casement.

MA. [*Leaning out.*] Oh, the beautiful frosty night— !

I cannot keep it from me. The greatest beauty like the old Greek sculpture is always cold ! My Prince of the hoar dew— ! My golden love, let me see you once more in that aureole of crimson sky ! [*With an infinite longing.*] Oh that the beauty I saw in my dream could return to me now— [*With sudden terrors.*] But to-morrow, how shall I face the misery of to-morrow ? Oh pity me, pity me— [*Calmer.*] And yet I have always known that my beloved would deliver me from bondage. [*With a gradually weaker voice as she sinks upon a chair.*] But I am weary of waiting—weary—weary—it is hard to resist the longing for sleep. [*She sighs as she reclines back out of sight at left inside of the open window. Pause.*]

[*There is a soft music of harps ; while the aurora borealis arises and glows in the sky. Soon a ghostly procession is seen to emerge like vapour from the neighbourhood of the cairn. Presently as it advances it grows more distinct, and then is discovered to consist of QUEEN MAEVE, tall, pale-faced and fair-haired, in a golden crown and gold embroidered robes ; of BOY PAGES in garlanded tunics and wearing wreaths of roses upon their heads ; of ancient Irish harpers with their harps ; of chieftains and warriors in conical caps ; of people, etc.*]

As they approach near to the castle, MAEVE O'HEYNE enters from the door at its front, and stands looking on in wonder. They halt ; and the harpers cease playing on their harps.

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

[Singing in broad solemn unison.]

Every hill which is at this Oenach
Hath under it heroes and Queens,
And poets and distributors,
And fair fierce women.

[The harpers recommence their music.]

MA. *[With a thrill of happiness.]* Ah, that song of Dorban I know so well—And this is Queen Maeve again.

[The harpers cease their music.]

[CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.]

Hast seen our warriors ? In their hands are white
shields
Ornamented with white silver signs.
They wield blue flaming swords,
And carry red horns with metal mountings.

MA. *[Listening.]* Now they are chanting the lay of Fiachna, son of Reta.

A BOY PAGE [*singing alone*].

Obedient to the settled order of the battle,
Preceding their prince of gracious mien
They march across blue lances——
Those troops of white warriors with knotted hair.

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

They march across blue lances——
Those troops of white warriors with knotted hair.

[*The harpers recommence their music.*]

Q. MA. Princess I come, as I have promised.

MA. [*Approaching and falling on her knees.*] My Queen—Oh save me, my queen.

Q. MA. O last of my daughters in the land, what help can I give you ?

MA. My beloved—where is he ?

Q. MA. He is coming over the mountains. He is coming to you over the mountains.

MA. [*Rising.*] Yes, I knew he was coming on the fairy March wind.

Q. MA. Your love is so great that you divine his coming ? and yet you can suffer bondage ?

MA. How shall I escape the stranger's bondage ?

Q. MA. I will take you to the land of joy.

MA. To Tir-nan-ogue—O Queen, do you rule in Tir-nan-ogue ?

Q. MA. The empire of the Gael is in Tir-nan-ogue. There during life he is at peace in the building of beauty from the past.

MA. And so the land you reign in is the home of living men.

Q. MA. Each man who comes to his ideal has come to Tir-nan-ogue.

MA. And thus we see you so young and so beautiful after all those two thousand years !

Q. MA. Your fame also shall remain beautiful and young.

MA. Of what kind is the happiness that makes Tir-nan-ogue happy ?

Q. MA. Happiness in the present as sweet as the remembrance of happiness.

MA. Then shall my happiness be great indeed.

Q. MA. You remember much happiness ?

MA. I remember beauty.

Q. MA. Those who love beauty shall see beauty.

MA. The immortal beauty of form—— !

Q. MA. Form that will awaken genius—— !

MA. Form is my beauty and my love !

[The harpers cease their music.]

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

Their strength, great as it is, can not be less.

They are sons of queens and kings.

On the heads of all a comely

Growth of hair yellow like gold——

A BOY PAGE.

Their bodies are graceful and majestic,

Their eyes with a look of power have the eye-ball blue.

Their teeth are brilliant like glass,
Their lips are red and thin.

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

Their bodies are graceful and majestic——
These sons of queens and kings.

[The harpers recommence their music.]

MA. So Fiachna is made to sing when the poet tells how the hero came from the land of the gods. I love that poem !

Q. MA. I have all the poems—the greatest those that are lost. Come into my land ; and they that made them shall sing them, and their music shall turn all things to beauty.

MA. Queen, I have seen that land afar.

Q. MA. You also have seen Tir-nan-ogue ?

MA. In my dreams, in my day-dreams——

Q. MA. Daughter, it is passing sweet when our day-dreams come true.

MA. Oh let me see the beloved of my day-dreams.

Q. MA. Your Prince of the hoar dew, when he comes, will give you rest.

MA. Rest without pain or fear of bondage—— ?

Q. MA. Rest in beauty—a beauty which is transcendently cold——

MA. Oh let me see that beauty. I have sought it in vain on earth.

Q. MA. He is coming, he is coming over the mountains. You shall speak to him when he is come.

MA. [*With a sudden disconsolate look.*] I will never speak to him.

Q. MA. Why, wayward child—— ?

MA. Queen, I cannot. The sight of such beauty will make me speechless.

Q. MA. Then shall you find peace in his beauty.

MA. But oh, my queen, let me see him.

Q. MA. You shall see him in the Northern lights of Tir-nan-ogue.

MA. And his beauty shall be my joy in an ideal land.

Q. MA. Beauty in the midst of all beautiful things.

MA. Oh take me to that land.

Q. MA. I am waiting for you, poor weary child.

MA. The land where my day-dreams will come true—— !

Q. MA. See, the Northern lights are passing before the dawn. We must not tarry.

MA. I am ready, my beautiful queen.

Q. MA. Then come with the Northern lights, beautiful ice maiden !

MA. I shall see my beauty—My love——!

[*Half swooning she falls on the neck of QUEEN MAEVE.*]

[*The harpers cease their music.*]

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

Noble and melodious music thou dost hear ;
Thou goest from kingdom to kingdom
Drinking from goblets of massy gold,
Thou wilt discourse with thy beloved.

A BOY PAGE.

We have carried from the plain Mag Mell
Thirty caldrons, thirty horns for drinking!
We have carried from it the lamentation sung by Mear
Daughter of Eochaid the Dumb.

[The harpers re-commence their music.]

CHORUS OF BOY PAGES.

What a marvel in Tir-nan-ogue
That mead should fall with each shower!
Drinking from goblets of massy gold.
Thou wilt discourse with thy beloved.

[During this song all, including MAEVE O'HEYNE, have gradually moved off towards the cairn and faded away with the aurora borealis, so that, when the music ceases, no trace of them remains. A faint grey light of dawn now prevails and then the whole scene, at the approach of sunrise, is discovered to be completely white with a thick coating of hoar frost.]

After a while HUGH FITZ WALTER, muffled and carrying a large bunch of flowers, enters from the left.

HUGH. I can wait no longer. I must come to her castle with the first light. How fine it looks decked out with the hoar frost! Oh, I hope she is safe and well. Let these be my morning offering before she awakes. *[He lays the flowers by the doorway of the castle.]*

THE O'HEYNE, *also muffled, enters from the left.*

THE O'H. [*Looking in the direction of HUGH.*] Ah ! you, too, are out early this morning.

HUGH. Yes—Somehow I felt I had to come.

THE O'H. What a blessing you are here at last, Hugh. [*He grasps him by the hand.*]

HUGH. I wish I could have returned sooner.

THE O'H. I wish you could have. Well, let that be.

HUGH. But why are you also about at this hour of the morning ? I did not expect to see any one stirring.

THE O'H. [*Peevishly.*] I could not sleep these hours past with thinking and thinking. Then something made me get up, and see what would happen.

HUGH. [*Anxiously.*] What would happen ? Heavens ! what do you expect to happen ?

THE O'H. Oh nothing, nothing, I suppose. Only my mind will not let me rest.

HUGH. Do you know I too was very uneasy about things last night.

THE O'H. [*Suspiciously.*] You, why— ? What reason could you have had ?

HUGH. [*With rather a forced laugh.*] Oh, none of course—How could I ?

THE O'H. Of course not, of course not—But come in to the fire, Hugh, and warm yourself. There has been a great frost last night.

HUGH. Yes, the whole country is white, as if it were covered with snow.

THE O'H. A March frost soon melts before the sun. See, it is already rising. The day is going to be a glorious one.

HUGH. There is an old saying—"Happy is the bride the sun shines on."

*As they go towards the door of the castle, FINOLA
O'HEYNE enters from it.*

FIN. Oh, what lovely flowers——!

HUGH. I brought them for Maeve. She is not yet awake?

FIN. No—I gave orders she was not to be disturbed. It was very late last night when she went to rest; and she seemed so tired.

HUGH. Then I would not have her disturbed for worlds. Will you bring her these flowers, Finola, when she awakes?

PEG INERNY enters from the right.

PEG. When she awakes—? Ah,—my Princess Maeve—do you think she will care for such flowers now?

HUGH. [*In a subdued voice.*] Why not—? Why do you say she would not?

PEG. Oh, it's a cold morning, a cruel cold morning.

FIN. Go away from this place. Let me never see you again.

PEG. I have never before been refused the shelter of O'Heyne Castle.

HUGH. O'Heyne Castle is never the better for your presence. I understand you are always importuning Miss O'Heyne.

THE O'H. Come, we must not be hard to the old woman on such a day as this. Go round to the kitchen, Peg, and get something to eat.

PEG. Yes, some food—I want some food and warmth, Prince. I have been out all night, and I am famished.

THE O'H. Well, then, get all you wish. The Castle hall is open to everyone in honour of my daughter's wedding to-day.

HUGH. Yes, we must try to make everyone happy to-day—even this wicked old woman.

PEG. [*With a sinister look.*] I suppose you also, my brave Englishman, think you ought to be happy.

HUGH. Why, of course—Don't you know I am to be married to-day?

PEG. [*Almost contemptuously.*] You married to the Princess Maeve——?

HUGH. [*Bridling up.*] Yes——

PEG. [*Mockingly.*] Well, well, how queer that you should think so——!

FIN. [*With a scared expression.*] There is misfortune in those words.

THE O'H. Peg Inerny, you are awakening my forebodings again.

PEG. [*Humbly.*] Oh, Prince, I can't say otherwise.

HUGH. [*Indignantly.*] What old woman's talk is this——?

PEG. [*With a quiet prophetic triumph.*] You think

I am only an old woman ; but I tell you that Eire can never be subdued.

HUGH. I should like to know what that has to do with the matter ?

PEG. [*Smiling insidiously.*] Perhaps the Englishman may think that he already holds her ? Ah she will slip like a fairy from his grasp. [*She laughs low and sardonically.*]

FIN. [*Excitedly to PEG INERNY.*] Leave the place at once, you wicked woman. Oh, drive her away, Hugh, before she says any more.

HUGH. [*Advances to PEG INERNY, who draws herself up defiantly. He then steps back, saying, with a forced laugh.*] What do I care for her. I shall soon be married and far away !

PEG. Take care, my fine Englishman, if your Irish Princess hasn't already slipped from you like a fairy.

THE O'H. [*Nervously.*] What do you mean, Peg Inerny.

PEG. Oh, my Prince, just before dawn upon the mountains—I saw her.

HUGH. [*With a look of terror.*] You saw her ?

PEG. [*With a smile of ecstasy.*] Yes, I saw my Princess Maeve !

HUGH. [*Turning perplexed to THE O'HEYNE and to FINOLA.*] But—but didn't you say she was here in the castle ?

THE O'H. [*With a helpless look.*] I thought so. I am sure I thought so. Didn't you say she was here. Finola ?

FIN. [*In a hollow voice.*] Yes, father— [*As if*

petrified she now slowly retreats towards the castle door, keeping her eyes always fixed on PEG INERNY.]

HUGH. Oh that Maeve should be wandering over the mountains on such a night as this——

THE O'H. [*Confusedly.*] I knew some misfortune was coming. What has happened ?

PEG. [*With an increasing ecstasy.*] If you had only seen her, as I saw her upon the mountain—She was so beautiful—so happy. You would have died at at the sight of such beauty, my Englishman.

HUGH. [*With a look of bitterness and despair.*] As if I required to be persuaded of her beauty—— !

PEG. [*Quietly.*] And you will never see it again.

[*Exit FINOLA O'HEYNES by door leading into the castle.*]

HUGH. [*Suddenly subdued.*] Never again—why never again—— ?

PEG. It has gone to where he is.

HUGH. [*Wildly.*] He—he—who is he ? Speak at once. Don't you see you torture me ?

PEG. The beauty that she loves——

HUGH. [*Growing quieter.*] Ah, I understand. Only that——

PEG. [*Calmly triumphant and ecstatic.*] Like the glory of the Northern lights was his face upon the mountains. And when she saw him, her own face shone like a star !

HUGH. [*As if transfixed.*] Oh what does all this mean ? [*Recovering himself.*] Ha—ha—it is nothing. Of course you are only raving. That's what it is. Anyone can see that.

THE O'H. [*With an agonised look.*] She has given utterance to my worst forebodings. Tell what you saw next, Peg Inerny.

PEG. The dawn came then ; and Princess Maeve went out from my sight with the stars !

[*Short pause. Cries of "help" are heard within the Castle. Then FINOLA O'HEYNE, with a scared face, appears at the open window over the entrance door.*

FIN. [*Bending over to left inside the window.*] Oh heavens, oh, merciful heavens, she is rigid—frozen. [*Then, after a moment's awful silence, turns to those outside and says in a voice of terror*—Maeve—she is sitting here at the open window—dead.

[*Curtain.*]

THE END.

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